

Wage Scale is Chief Cause of Welsh Coal Mine Strike

While Owners Reap Profits of 50 to 100 Per Cent. in War Time, Increase in Men's Pay is Limited—Miners Served Notice in April.

The strike at the coal mines of South Wales, by which nearly 200,000 men have laid down their tools, cannot have come as a surprise to the British Government nor to the mine owners. Notices of intention to strike at the end of three months unless their demands were granted were handed to the coal operators early in April by the men, and this formally was preceded by months of agitation in Parliament by the leaders of the labor political parties. In the last three months the President of the Board of Trade, Walter Runciman, who has charge of the Government's part in the settlement between the miners and the coal owners, has had numerous conferences in London with representatives of both sides.

The strike notices handed in early in April marked the date when the old wage agreements were terminated over the whole of the coal fields of Great Britain. If the war had not intervened and given the coal owners the pretext for asking that the existing regulations ought not to be disturbed when the nation was at war, there would have been no question of the right of the miners to make new terms with the operators last April. The preliminaries had already been fixed, the new agreements to run for three years, expiring in April, 1918.

How Wage Scale Works.

The South Wales Miners' Federation, the one involved in the present strike, was particularly anxious for the new terms, as its members have for a long time been discontented under the old maximum wage system. According to it, wages vary as to the selling price of coal only up to a certain point, after which the total profit goes to the mine owner. The maximum price which fixes wages was reached more than six months ago in South Wales, and the miners are now insisting that this minimum-maximum scale be abolished altogether. They say that when coal goes down they must suffer a reduction in wages. When coal goes up, they think they should enjoy corresponding profit in wages to the full extent of the increase in price.

State control of the mines of South Wales and Scotland has been advocated by the miners of those districts for many years, on account of the uncompromising attitude assumed by the owners. The general purpose of the present strike is to force the Government to take over the full control of the mines as they did at the beginning of the war of the railroads under an arrangement which has been eminently satisfactory to the country as well as to the men, and which has prevented the excessive profits in the railroad business which the miners claim the mine owners have been obtaining. The Government has attempted to be neutral on the mining situation, and in consequence has done little which pleases either side to the controversy.

The repeated refusal of Prince Minister Asquith, as mediator three months ago, to give official approval to the paramount claim of the miners' unions for national recognition, which is the position assumed likewise by Mr. Runciman as mediator, forms the basis for the belief among the miners that the Gov-

ernment is actually on the side of the capitalist mine owners. The workmen believe, therefore, that the recent action of the South Wales mine owners in placing themselves unreservedly in the hands of the Government implies no loss to them, as far as safe-guarding their fundamental interests is concerned.

One Year of Profit.

The Government regulation fixing the price of coal at the pit head, which has been published in the last few days, comes too late, according to the miners, to abolish the evils of excessive profits. The mine owners have already had a year of unrestricted liberty given to them by the Government, in the fact of protests from every section of the country, and emanating from almost every household, as well as the miners, and the new regulation will not affect the contracts already made by the collieries.

These have recently been signed in large numbers, apparently in anticipation of Government action, and it is understood that they provide for the prices of coal for the coming year. The Government regulation of prices, being for the period of the war, may not be applied at all unless the war is in existence when new coal contracts are made, or unless the Government arbitrarily sweeps aside the contracts.

On February 25, the Board of Trade, on account of the nation-wide dissatisfaction among householders over the increase in the price of coal for domestic use, appointed a committee to investigate the matter. Their report sustained the consumers in their contention that the exorbitant price of coal was not justified by present war conditions, and that there was no reason why these prices should be sustained. The people were paying on an average of from 9 to 11 shillings (\$1.75 to \$2.25) more for coal, per ton, which the Board of Trade Committee declared should not legitimately cost more than 1 shilling 6 pence (37 cents) more on the ton.

Praised the Miners.

The President of the Board of Trade fully endorsed the report of his committee and a few weeks ago he made a stirring speech in the House of Commons—where the miners say was deliberately suppressed by the big London dailies because it was too favorable to their cause. Mr. Runciman openly charged that the coal-owners were fixing exorbitant prices at the pit-head and that they were using the nation's needs to further their own selfish ends. He stated at the same time that the miners of Great Britain were working faithfully and energetically. Many thousands of them had joined the colors and consequently the total output had diminished, but the "get" per man had increased.

The Prime Minister himself, in his famous speech at Newcastle early in May, in which he made an eloquent appeal for recruits, stated that the coal miners had already enlisted up to the number of 217,000, representing 20 per cent of the total number of recruits and 50 per cent of the miners of military age.

Ways and Means.

"I'm going to give a little luncheon to the ladies of the Bridge Club," remarked the lady of the house casually.

"Oh, you are, are you?" growled her better half. "Perhaps you'll be so kind as to tell me where the money is coming from."

"I've arranged all that," said wife. "You're going to give up kelly pool for a week or two and smoke a pipe instead of those expensive cigars."

Useful.

"I've got to earn some money during my summer vacation," remarked the law student, "but I'd like, if possible, to work at something that will be of use to me later on."

"Why don't you get a job as waiter in a summer hotel?" advised the professor. "The experience you will get in making out bills will come in mighty handy when you begin the practice of law."

A Genius.

Hubby was late, but he had a perfectly good excuse—so good that his wife could make no use of the lecture she had prepared for him.

All she said was: "John, if the ability you display in thinking up excuses for staying out late could only be turned into some useful channel, the world would hail you as one of the greatest inventive geniuses that ever lived."

Annoying.

Just as the young man raised his hat in response to a bow and a smile from the beautiful girl who was passing by his foot struck a banana peel and flew out from under him. He landed on the back of his neck, his hat flying in one direction and his cane in another.

"Are you hurt?" asked a friendly policeman, as the victim of the accident sat up and began to swear volubly.

"Hurt?" he exclaimed. "No, I'm not hurt. I'm dead sore, that's what I am. That bonehead camera man across the street forgot to turn the crank, and now I've got to do that fall all over again."

Then the policeman realized that he had been privileged to see a moving picture comedy in the making.

Shelled.

"Jack used to be absolutely neutral until he was hit by a shell."

"Why, I didn't know he'd been anywhere near the firing line."

"He hasn't. He was canoeing on the Harlem River, and one of those four-oared shells came along and punched a hole in the side of his canoe."

Habitual.

"I wonder why figgers always makes light of other people's misfortunes."

"It comes natural to him, I guess. You see, he's claim agent for a railroad company."

STATE COURTS DIFFER ON COMPENSATION ACT

Labor Bureau Report Shows Wide Divergence of Opinion As to Liability.

WASHINGTON.—The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics of the Department of Labor has issued a review of court decisions affecting labor. Two hundred and sixty-five decisions are summarized, dealing with the application and construction of the laws, or with the application of the principles of the common law to the rights and relations of the worker. A bulletin issued on the subject states in part:

"The largest group of cases on a single subject is that relating to the new form of legislation known as workmen's compensation laws. The decisions on this subject range from questions of constitutionality—decided adversely in the case of the Kentucky statute and favorably in other State courts—to the determination of definitions or of single points of dispute.

Occupational Diseases.

"In considering occupational diseases, for instance, the Massachusetts courts hold lead poisoning to be within the State act providing for compensation for personal injuries arising out of and in the course of employment, while the Michigan courts, under the provisions of a State law similarly expressed, hold that a case of lead poisoning is not entitled to compensation.

"Another important group of decisions in a related field is those determining the application of the Federal liability statute to different classes of railroad employments. Several cases are found which turn on the nature of the employment of the injured person, that is, whether in interstate commerce or not. The courts are not uniform in their construction of this statute, but among the employments found to be within the act were those of a blacksmith repairing cars used in interstate commerce, a telegraph lineman engaged in repair work, workmen installing block signal systems, a carpenter building an addition to a freight shed, a laborer carrying coal to heat a shop in which interstate cars were being repaired, etc.

"Other classes of Federal laws that received considerable attention in the court decisions are those limiting the hours of service of railroad employes, and requiring the supply and maintenance of safety appliances.

GIRL "BELLHOPS" IN LONDON.

Boys Gone to War—Sisters Do Well in Their Places.

London.—The girl "bellhop" is the latest innovation in the large West End hotels, and she is carrying on her many and varied duties in a way that pleases every one.

Smartly dressed, with white gloves and gold braid on her uniform, page girls are seen at the front entrances of many West End hotels. "Our real 'bellhop' has gone into a war factory," explained the manager of one hotel, recently. "His successor has been here but a few days, and I must say she is proving highly satisfactory. She is intelligent, and she is quick and polite. She is making herself extremely popular with our regular customers, and is doing quite well with 'tips.'"

The same story was told at other hotels where the girl "bellhop" has been introduced. The army of girl ticket collectors, lift girls and girl messengers grows daily. "I should not be surprised if we have to have girl telegraph boys," said a postmaster in the city. "We can't get boys, and we are short staffed now, because they are either enlisting or going into munition factories."

LONGSHOREMEN WALK OUT.

New York.—Nine hundred longshoremen employed by the Clyde Steamship Company and the Mallory Steamship Company went on strike Wednesday for more wages. A leader declared that longshoremen employed by most of the large steamship companies would be on strike within a week. A tie-up on the piers may cause delay in the shipment of foodstuffs and war supplies to Europe.

TO VOTE ON ADVANCE.

East Liverpool, O.—Edward Menge, President of the National Brotherhood of Operative Potters, announced that the eight thousand members of the union would be asked to vote in a referendum on the wage advance resolutions, adopted by the recent convention at Atlantic City.

Expresses.

"Any fish running?" asked the man in the motor boat, as he approached the place where a group of men with rods and lines were sitting in silence waiting for results.

"Plenty of 'em running," came the reply from one of the fishermen, who was a railroad conductor with a day off, "but not a darn one of 'em is making any local stops."

Why Not Make Free Trip to Frisco Fair

The Labor Advocate has decided to give its friends the opportunity to make some of the most pleasurable trips to be taken in this country, and at no expense to themselves.

Would you like to make the trip to the American Federation of Labor meeting in San Francisco next fall?

Would you like to go to the meeting of the Ohio State Federation at Mansfield, Ohio?

The trip to San Francisco will be made at the time when the great Panama Exposition is in full swing; at the time when all the nations of the world will have their exhibits fully completed, and when the crowds will be at their largest and the city of the Golden Gate in its most gala attire.

The opportunity seldom has been offered to the person of moderate means to take such trip without cost to himself. This trip means a liberal education; it means that you may see all the wonders of modern times, meet and mingle with the peoples of all countries; see the greatest works of art; the most wonderful buildings and electrical effects ever shown; the Chicago and the St. Louis Fairs were as the first steamboat that ran up the Hudson as compared with the present-day trans-Atlantic ocean greyhounds when viewed with what San Francisco will offer to the world this year.

The trip to Mansfield, O., while of lesser importance, also has manifold advantages. Mansfield is a modern little

city, nestling in one of the most beautiful valleys in the world. A week there will give you an outing, free from the smoke and grime of a great city, a chance to "get back to the country" and see the likeness of the old-home town.

Do you want to take one of these trips?

This is how you can do it without cost to yourself:

Popularity Contest.

The one obtaining the greatest number of votes will receive a railroad ticket over any line he may choose, sleeping car fare and \$50 in cash to pay his incidental expenses.

The one receiving the second highest number of votes will receive his railroad fare to and from Mansfield, O., and \$35 in cash.

To the person receiving the third highest number of votes will be given the same railroad facilities and \$25 in cash.

To the contestant getting the fourth highest number of ballots there will be given the same railroad facilities and \$15 in cash.

Does this sound good to you?

Then this is the way to obtain for yourself or your friends these coveted privileges:

Come to Room 34, Thoms Building, Main and Fifth streets, and the details will be explained. It will not cost you a cent to inquire, and it may mean one of the most profitable and pleasurable events of your life.

COOLIE MANNED SHIPS PASS TO BRITISH OWNERSHIP

San Francisco.—The Dollar Steamship Company has sold two of its vessels to parties in Vancouver, British Columbia, according to statements by Capt. Dollar. This ship owner has sold vessels before but the seamen's bill is blamed for the present disposal. Lately Capt. Dollar has been in the public press almost continuously with threats to change the registry of his ships from American to British because of the seamen's act, and Editor Scharrenberg of the Coast Seamen's Journal, makes this comment:

"The one consoling thought in the whole affair is the knowledge of the fact that no American will lose his job because of this transfer. The same coolie crew and the same alien officers who manned the Dollar steamers during their temporary sojourn under the Stars and Stripes will remain on those ships under the Union Jack.

"It so happens there are no Americans on these American (?) ships. So the change in registry will be exceedingly simple. It means a change of flag and nothing else. Yet Capt. Dollar will continue to pose as the first shining victim of that horrid, abominable seamen's act. He will continue to tell the simple Simons from Maine to California that he could no longer compete with foreign ships because of onerous conditions regarding the character and comforts of the crew, etc., imposed upon his ships by an ill-advised Congress.

"Yes, indeed, it is simply awful for Americans to contemplate this awful loss. But our British friends need not rejoice. Capt. Dollar will keep them on the jump with frequent threats to change his vessels to Chinese registry.

"Capt. Dollar will never be perfect happy until he finds some nation which permits him to run his ships just as he pleases, without any kind of restrictions or regulations whatever."

Relieved.

"That's a terrible load off my mind!" the good wife heard her husband exclaim as he entered the house.

"What is it, dear?" she inquired anxiously as she rushed to his side.

"There it is," he replied, pointing to his derby hat. "And believe me, it was some load."

A Busy Day.

"There's a delivery wagon driving up to our door," said Hubby. "Been shopping again?"

"Well, I didn't have anything to do," replied Wife. "So I went down to Wanacooper's and listened to the concert in their auditorium. It was just splendid, too. After that I went up to the grocery department and tried some new cereal they're demonstrating. I managed to get three helpings, so I didn't need to spend any money for luncheon. Then I looked at the fashion parade and spent the rest of the afternoon in the art gallery. After that I didn't feel as if I ought to leave the store without buying anything, so I had them send me up a spool of thread."

EDUCATIONAL NOTES.

In every one of the fifty-four grammar schools of Portland, Ore., there is a Parent Teachers' association.

Milwaukee has installed twenty-five of the finest type of pool or billiard tables in its public school buildings.

Social dancing for young and old has taken place in 200 schoolhouses throughout the country during the past season, according to the Russell Sage foundation.

Every immigrant child arriving at a United States port of entry will henceforth be reported immediately to the school authorities in the locality to which he is destined, so that he may be placed in school without loss of time.

PITH AND POINT.

Spain, without apparent effort, is keeping its bolero on.

Some men learn a trade, and others cultivate a hearty handshake.

A woman can sharpen a pencil as gracefully as a man can thread a needle.

Many of the good things to be said about men are held for release until they die.

Easiest thing in the world to get up in the air, but it is hard to gracefully get down again.

In the matter of total abstinence the British people seem to be inclined to "let George do it."

Now they are saying that Huerta amounts to something after all; he's a New taxpayer.

Switzerland is a small island of common sense entirely surrounded by a sea of war madness.

Columbia university professors find that meat and humidity decrease working capacity. This has been generally suspected.

A Pittsburgh girl has had an admirer arrested for stealing her teeth. Love making must be strenuous business in the Smoky City.

It is odd that while war is raging all through Europe South America, renowned for its revolution habit, should be advocating permanent peace.

Announcement is made that the tribunal of peace at The Hague is sixteen years old. Ought to be able to sit up and take notice just about now.

Dr. Wiley's dictum that woman's best profession is marriage is not weakened by the occasional demonstration that, like all other professions, it has its failures.

A Spicy Retort.

"What does it mean when they say a man is mustard in?" asked a lad of a distinguished Major at the armory.

"It means he's in for a hot time." And the Major patted the child's head and gave him half a dollar.